



Western
Drought
Coordination
Council

Year 2 Work Plan

June 1998-October 1999

June 1998

1.0 BACKGROUND

In February 1997, the “Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Future Management of Drought in the West” (MOU) was signed by the Western Governors’ Association, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The MOU has been amended to add several new partners. They are the Department of Commerce, Department of the Army, the Fort Belknap Community Council, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the Chickasaw Nation and the National Association of Counties. The purpose of the MOU is to establish a more comprehensive, integrated and expeditious response to drought emergencies, and to cooperatively plan for future droughts, a recurrent feature of the climate of the West. Through the MOU, the signatories committed to establish a Western Drought Coordination Council (WDCC) which will serve to coordinate drought planning and response in the West as well as consider approaches to avoid and mitigate future impacts of drought.

2.0 COUNCIL MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Mission Statement

Through a balanced, open, and inclusive process, help states, federal agencies, tribes, local governments, and local water utility agencies develop and implement model drought and management/mitigation measures that reduce impacts associated with droughts, and that promote economic and environmental sustainability in the West.

2.2 Council Objectives

- Encourage and help western states, local governments, and tribes to develop and implement drought preparedness and mitigation programs and plans by establishing and maintaining information on techniques and procedures for drought monitoring and prediction, response, planning, and mitigation.
- Assist states, communities, and individuals to make better decisions. Identify and make recommendations on water use and drought issues, legislation, and program implementation at the state, regional, and national levels.
- Improve information exchange and coordination at all levels of government by facilitating the development and implementation of an efficient drought monitoring and information delivery system.
- Heighten awareness and understanding of regional drought preparedness, mitigation and response issues including dissemination of available information on water management issues in the West.

3.0 COUNCIL STRUCTURE

3.1 Council Composition

The Western Drought Coordination Council (Council) shall be comprised of senior management officials from interested federal agencies, three governors representing the Western Governors' Association, three tribal leaders, and one person representing elected local government officials. A Council member may designate a senior staff member with responsibility for drought issues within their respective department, agency, state, tribe, or local government to represent the member on the Council. All Council members must sign the MOU. Current members of the Council are listed below.

- Gary E. Johnson, Governor of New Mexico, Council Co-Chair
- Richard Rominger, Deputy Secretary, US Department of Agriculture, Council Co-Chair
- Rupert Alden, San Carlos Apache Tribal Council
- Michael Armstrong, Associate Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency
- John Baker, Commissioner, Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission
- Charles H. Blackwell, Chickasaw Ambassador to the United States, Chickasaw Nation
- Ron Christensen, Supervisor, Gila County, National Association of Counties
- William M. Daley, Secretary, US Department of Commerce
- Michael L. Davis, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Civil Works, US Department of the Army
- Tommy Grier, (Acting) Director, Division of Local Government, Colorado Department of Local Affairs
- Bernard Kulik, Associate Administrator, Small Business Administration
- Eluid L. Martinez, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, US Department of the Interior
- Ron Speakthunder, Fort Belknap Community Council

3.2 Council Leadership

The Council shall be led by two co-chairs. One co-chair shall be the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (or the Secretary's designee) acting in the role of lead federal agency. One co-chair shall be a governor (or the governor's designee) who shall be named by the Chair of the Western Governors' Association.

3.3 Adding Council Members

Through a letter from the co-chairs, the Council may invite the secretary or administrator of any federal department, independent federal agency or a non-federal entity that has programs related to drought within their jurisdiction to become a signatory of the MOU and a member of the Council. Following receipt of the letter from the co-chairs and signing the MOU, the invitee shall become a full member of the Council.

3.4 Council Functions

The functions of the Council shall include overseeing the development, adoption, and implementation of the annual Work Plan. The Council will also establish working groups and appoint members to the Steering Group. The Council shall prepare, on an annual basis, a Statement of Accomplishments report.

3.5 Council Procedures

The work of the Council will be done by consensus. All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public. The Council shall meet at least once per year.

4.0 STEERING GROUP

4.1 Steering Group Composition

The Steering Group shall be comprised of the following:

- one senior policy advisor/staff representing each of the Council members, and
- the co-chairs of each working group.

4.2 Steering Group Leadership

The Steering Group shall be led by two co-chairs, one co-chair named by each of the Council Co-Chairs.

4.3 Steering Group Functions

The Steering Group 's functions include:

- securing resources to carry out the work of the Council;
- coordinating the development, revision, and implementation of the annual Work Plan by the working groups;
- organizing subgroups as necessary to carry out the day-to-day activities of the Council; acting as liaison between the Council and the working groups; and
- providing a statement of accomplishments, annually, to the Council identifying progress in implementing the Work Plan.

4.4 Steering Group Procedures

The work of the Steering Group will be done by consensus. The Steering Group will meet periodically, as necessary, throughout the year to coordinate working group activities, and will meet at least once prior to the annual Council meeting to finalize the Statement of Accomplishments and the next year's work plan. All meetings of the Steering Group shall be open to the public.

4.5 Specific Action Items (June 1998-September 1999)

- Assess effectiveness of various Council activities and make or recommend changes/improvements or in setting priorities, as necessary.
- Monitor progress of S222/HR 3035 (referred to as the National Drought Policy Act of 1998), and if enacted, work with the National Drought Policy Act's Federal Advisory Commission to accomplish its objective. The Steering Group will identify potential strategies for the Council's interaction with the federal advisory commission to ensure that its activities complement, but do not duplicate, those of the Commission.
- Identify and implement a process for maintaining/updating products of the Council including identification of long-term maintenance.
- Work with western states to encourage implementation of the Council's working group tools and develop a process to measure the success of implementation through development or modification of drought contingency plans to include preparedness and mitigation; monitoring and assessment; and response.

5.0 WORKING GROUPS

5.1 Working Groups

Working groups shall be established by the Council.

5.2 Working Groups' Composition

Any person or organization which has a direct interest in, or expertise regarding, drought-related issues shall be welcome to participate in any Council working group.

5.3 Working Groups' Leadership

Each working group shall be led by two co-chairs, one co-chair named by each of the Council Co-Chairs.

5.4 Working Groups' Functions

During the first year, there were four working groups formed under the Council to develop and make recommendations to the Council through the Steering Group for implementation in accordance with the Work Plan. These working groups will continue through the second year, 1998-1999. These groups and the specific action items that each group will initiate or continue during the second year are discussed below. The goal of each working group will be to accomplish the specific action items identified for the current Council year (June 1998 through September 1999)), although it is recognized that some of these actions will carry over to subsequent years. The working groups and Steering Group will cooperate with each other to identify and implement specific action items as well as carry out Council direction. The working groups will report the results of their progress on each action through the Steering Group to the Council at regular intervals and summarize their progress in an annual Statement of Accomplishments report. The number and focus of the working groups may change over time as tasks are accomplished and the Work Plan is revised.

5.5 Preparedness and Mitigation (PAM) Working Group

5.5.1 Goals and Objectives.

This Working Group will concentrate on short- and long-term management issues that are intended to assist states, federal agencies, tribes, local governments and water utility agencies to reduce the economic, social, and environmental impacts (i.e. vulnerability) of drought in the West. The Working Group will identify preparedness actions, and mitigation options that will facilitate this process and will work cooperatively with localities, states, Indian tribes, and federal agencies. The Working Group will build on the drought assessment, response, and planning experiences in western states, localities, tribal communities, and federal agencies, and will seek to identify new and innovative solutions to drought and water management issues. The Working Group will promote drought contingency planning, emphasizing a more proactive, anticipatory approach to drought management in the region .

For the purposes of this Work Plan the term mitigation is defined as those specific measures, projects, and actions taken with the intent to save lives, preserve environmental systems, and reduce risk of future damage, hardship, ecological disruption, or suffering from a drought.

Some general, on-going goals of the Preparedness and Mitigation Working Group include:

- Developing recommendations to the Council for state, federal agencies, tribes, local governments, and water utility agencies on drought planning and management alternatives to mitigate short- and long-term impacts before, during, and after drought emergencies occur.
- Contributing or linking to drought resources on the Internet, such as the National Drought Mitigation Center's web information clearinghouse on drought monitoring and prediction, response, mitigation, and preparedness for users throughout the region.

- Developing educational resources (e.g. booklets, reports, videos, drought simulations) that promote the concepts of drought planning and mitigation to a diverse audience.
- Interacting with local, state, tribal, and federal officials in the West and in other regions to share experiences on drought planning and mitigation.

5.5.2 Specific Action Items (June 1998 through September 1999)

The Preparedness and Mitigation Working Group will:

- Continue to work with the NDMC to collect, summarize, and distribute existing and newly developed drought plans. These plans will be both at the state and local levels. This item will enhance or update the project currently being completed at the NDMC; the NDMC project analyzes state level mitigation actions within drought plans.
- Continue the development, dissemination and implementation of *How to Reduce Drought Risk*.
- Create a document to complement *How to Reduce Drought Risk* that provides additional guidance, details, and experience-based results for implementing risk-reducing strategies and actions.
- Establish a procedure for the identification of the needs for and the process of providing Drought Planning Workshops and identify the appropriate role for the Western Drought Coordination Council.
- Develop a checklist that can be used by those with existing drought plans to determine whether or not the plan or particular sections of the plan may need to be updated or modified to address preparedness and mitigation measures as well as response actions.

5.6 Monitoring, Assessment, and Prediction (MAP) Working Group

5.6.1 Goals and Objectives.

Advances have been made over the past decade in understanding climate systems. Research will continue to improve our knowledge about climate systems and our capability to understand and predict climate anomalies such as drought, but there are no simple solutions in sight. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a system that provides timely information about the occurrence of drought to local, state, tribal, and federal officials responsible for implementing drought response measures. The primary goal of the Working Group will be to develop such a monitoring system and then to maintain and improve the system.

The MAP Working Group's goals are three-fold: monitoring, assessment and prediction. The Working Group will pursue the development of a comprehensive monitoring system to collect,

analyze and disseminate available data and products in a useable manner. The system will also track physical impacts of drought to assist others in assessing impacts on various water users, economic sectors and the environment. The Working Group will assess and prepare guidelines for a nationwide drought early warning system for use by decision makers. Finally, the Working Group's prediction component goal is to provide information to decision makers on the onset, severity and termination of drought.

5.6.2 Specific Action Items (June 1998 through September 1999)

The MAP Working Group will continue to produce the *Western Climate and Water Status*, a quarterly drought assessment. The assessment will include a 2-page summary distributed to policy makers and a more detailed, technical version posted on the Council's web site. In preparing the quarterly drought assessment the following work items will be completed.

- The MAP group will continue to find appropriate data for use in producing the quarterly drought assessment, and the sources then linked to the electronic-version of *Western Climate and Water Status*.
- The Working Group will conduct local, regional, and national evaluation of available data, including mean, median, and variance to highlight daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, yearly, and historic anomalies.
- The Working Group will continue to monitor derived variables and indices for drought.
- Monthly, seasonal, annual, and interannual forecasts will be monitored by the Working Group and interpreted for decision makers.
- The Working Group will monitor the verification efforts for long-range forecasts to evaluate their suitability for use by decision makers involved in drought-related activities. A summary report will be produced in consultation with the Communications Working Group.
- The Working Group will continue to monitor drought prediction techniques and technologies, including the application of soil moisture, evaporation, and atmospheric and global ocean circulation to support improved forecasting.
- The Working Group will make a determination of operational definitions and associated "triggers" and descriptive terms for meteorological, agricultural, and hydrological drought consistent with needs and activities of the Council. The Working Group will also determine appropriate indicators for assessing drought impact.
- The MAP group will distribute information related to data sources via the Council homepage.

- Aggregate data on species habitat requirements, especially threatened and endangered species, regarding instream consumptive needs and minimum thresholds.

5.7 Response Working Group

5.7.1 Goals and Objectives.

This Working Group will concentrate on enhancing the drought response capability of federal agencies, states, localities and tribes; promoting regional drought response mutual aid; strengthening intergovernmental response partnerships; and improving overall drought response management and customer service for future droughts. This will be accomplished by (1) identifying and cataloging drought assistance programs, resources, and points-of-contact; (2) aggregating western states' unmet needs in times of drought; (3) identifying drought response programmatic issues affecting the community and the environment; (4) identifying potential federal, state, tribal and local drought response mitigation strategies that consider all facets of the community and the environment, in cooperation with the Preparedness and Mitigation Working Group; and (5) publicizing drought response lessons learned, in cooperation with the Communications Working Group.

5.7.2 Specific Action Items (June 1998 through September 1999)

During the coming year, the Response Working Group will:

- Continue collecting historical data from states in response to our survey distributed during Year 1; analyze the data; and prepare a report identifying typical short-term drought impacts and potential strategies for addressing these impacts.
- Consolidate and disseminate the lessons learned as reported in various drought response evaluation reports.
- Develop a system by which states can report unmet needs when a drought occurs, and in coordination with state drought response organizations, make action recommendations for regional response and facilitate response actions, mutual aid, and partnerships.
- Periodically update the information in the *Catalog of Federal Assistance Programs* to ensure that it is accurate. Coordinate with the Communications Working Group to improve interactive capability and user-friendliness of the Internet document and to determine necessity for, and if appropriate, method of production and distribution of hard copies of the catalog.
- Evaluate existing sources of drought contacts such as the list available through the NDMC website, and if necessary, update existing sources or develop a Council drought contact list.

- Develop recommendations that facilitate the effectiveness and efficiency of drought response when a drought affects more than one state.
- In coordination with the Preparedness and Mitigation Working Group, stress the importance of planning and exercising for drought to mitigate the effects rather than relying on response programs for assistance after the fact.

5.7.3 Future Action Items

Over the long-run, the Response Working Group intends to:

- Develop a regional drought response data base.
- In consultation with the Communications Working Group, create a regional network of working professionals with expertise in drought response.
- Strengthen ties to the private sector, businesses, industry, and professional organizations and associations.
- In cooperation with the Preparedness and Mitigation Working Group, promote the establishment within each state of a state-level drought response organizational structure and a comprehensive state drought plan that includes monitoring and risk assessment activities, and emphasizes both short- and long-term drought mitigation.
- Develop a list of potential impacts of extended, multi-year droughts (3 years or more), especially those in commerce, energy, and public health sectors.

5.8 Communications Working Group

5.8.1 Goals and Objectives.

The Communications Working Group's primary audience is identified as all parties interested in the objectives of the Council. The focus of the Working Group is to network with all parties interested in the mission of the Council and ensure that the proper means of communication are known, current, and widely distributed. The objectives of the Working Group are to: (1) identify and use existing drought-related information networks, and suggest complementary means of communication, where appropriate; (2) facilitate the exchange and dissemination of drought-related information, and act as a clearinghouse for those documents (where appropriate); (3) provide a forum for feedback and evaluation of information, programs, and services; and (4) provide an active communication outreach service for the Council through press releases and the preparation of articles for publication.

Some general, on-going goals of the Communications Working Group include:

- working closely with the other working groups to prepare, review and disseminate products or documents, and
- preparing or making presentations regarding Council activities.

5.8.2 Specific Action Items (June 1998 through September 1999).

During this year, the Communications Working Group will:

- Work with the Steering Group and other working groups to increase the visibility of the Council and to broaden awareness of the benefits of drought contingency planning.
- Work with the Response Working Group to make the *Catalog of Federal Assistance Programs* an interactive Internet product on the Council web site.
- Develop media briefing package that describes the Western Drought Coordination Council and its activities for use by Council members.
- Complete the drought media briefing package, develop a generic western states drought media briefing package that can be modified and supplemented with geographic-specific materials for state's use.
- Continue to update and improve the Council web site.
- Update and improve the catalog of drought communications.
- Develop and implement a training program which the communications process and communications-related products (how to write for your target audience, facilitation, etc.).
- Present the Western Drought Coordination Council's drought preparedness and mitigation efforts to the Extension directors of the Western United States and seek their assistance in creating awareness of Council planning and educational materials among Extension educators in their respective states.

6.0 COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Administration

Coordination of Council activities is provided by the WDCC Liaison at the Western Governor's Association in consultation with the WDCC Steering Group. The WDCC Liaison is responsible for coordinating implementation of the Council's work plan and also provides program management services in consultation with the WDCC Steering Group, Western Governor's

Association and the WDCC Technical Advisor. These services include tracking of work product development and progress; preparing reports and budget documents.

The Director of the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska serves as the Council's Technical Advisor on drought activities which includes development and review of drought-related planning documents as part of the Council working groups. The National Drought Mitigation Center staff provides support to the Council as members of various working groups.

6.2 Funding Needs

The Council recognizes that accomplishing its goals requires financial support. Administration and management costs include: personnel, meetings, conference calls, printing, and mailing. These costs for June 1998 through August 1999 are projected to be \$100,000 per year, as indicated in the budget table. The extended Council year time frame, which runs from May 1999 to August 1999 rather than May 1999, is being implemented so that the Council budget year will coincide with the federal fiscal year which runs from October through September.

A "loaned" federal executive from the Bureau of Reclamation will remain at WGA for the second Council year to serve as the Council Liaison. The Liaison has provided and will continue to serve as program manager for this activity, in consultation with the Council Steering Group, coordinating the implementation of the existing work plan, development of future work plans, and budgets. The Bureau of Reclamation, an agency of the Department of the Interior, is funding and will continue to fund the salary of Reclamation's "loaned" federal executive (the Council Liaison).

A budget summary for Council Year 2 has been drafted. The total amount of the proposed budget for Year 2 is \$100,000. Because the total amount of funds that will become available in Year 2 is not known at this time, the items in the budget table have been prioritized and presented to the Council in a manner which allows the Steering Group to ensure that the items funded address the primary concerns of the group.

WESTERN DROUGHT COORDINATION COUNCIL
Budget Description and Justification

June 1, 1998--September 30, 1999

Category	WDCC Year 1 Budget (Actual)	WDCC Year 2 Budget Request
NDMC PERSONNEL		
WDCC Technical Advisor (.20 FTE, 53 days) for attendance at meetings, review of Council's products, conference call participation, and Congressional briefings.	\$ 7,890	\$ 11,000
Secretary (.25 FTE, 66 days) for preparation and distribution of Council-related correspondence including maintenance of the mailing list for and distribution of <i>Western Climate and Water Status</i> ; scheduling of conference calls; and assisting with meeting arrangements.	\$ 1,356	\$ 6,400
WDCC ACTIVITIES		
WGA COUNCIL LIAISON Operating and travel costs associated with WDCC activities, includes travel to annual meeting for WGA staff and WGA-staff assistance on press releases to governors, etc. This amount does not include labor costs which are provided in-kind by the Bureau of Reclamation.	\$10,000	\$ 15,000
TRAVEL Director and NDMC staff (WDCC Annual Meeting, WGA/Denver, Washington, D.C.)	\$ 2,946	\$ 5,000
MEETINGS (WDCC Annual Meeting including briefing books & Steering Group meeting)	\$ 7,000	\$ 9,000
COMMUNICATIONS RELATED EXPENSES Telephones, fax, conference calls, postage/express mail, pamphlet supplies.	\$ 1,187	\$ 3,500
MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE & COMPUTER SUPPLIES	\$ 553	\$ 1,500
DISCRETIONARY ITEMS The remainder of this table consists of budget items associated with Council product development that would be prioritized and funded as directed by the Steering Group. Please note that costs associated with labor are shown as the cost to the Council and do not include NDMC in-kind contributions. The days assigned to each task are the task time used in development of the labor cost.		

<u>Preparedness & Mitigation Working Group Items:</u> Collection, summarization and distribution of existing drought plans. (\$1500) 15 days Development/revision, dissemination and implementation of <i>How to Reduce Drought Risk</i> . (\$6200) 50 days Review of companion guide to <i>How to Reduce Drought Risk</i> Provide supplemental information and coordination of the two documents. (\$2900) 30 days Development of checklist to determine whether drought plans need to be updated. (\$2900) 30 days Publication of <i>How to Reduce Drought Risk</i> . (\$1000)	\$10,624	\$ 14,500
<u>Monitoring, Assessment and Prediction Working Group Items:</u> Monitoring, assessment and prediction activities related to quarterly report development. (\$6300) 72.5 days Distribution of climate related information. (\$200) 2.5 days Identification of triggers for drought types. (\$900) 10 days Copying and distribution of <i>Western Climate and Water Status--</i> approximately 5 quarters @ 400 copies/quarter. (\$3000)		\$ 10,400
<u>Response Working Group Items:</u> Product development assistance to Response Working Group as requested by co-chairs. (\$2800) 29 days Development of Historical Drought Response Database (\$5000) Publication of <i>Catalog of Federal Assistance Programs</i> . (\$1000)		\$ 8,800

<u>Communications Working Group Items:</u>	\$ 4,740	\$ 5,900
Edit, desktop publish and web publish <i>Western Climate & Water Status</i> . (\$900) 12.5 days		
Update and improve the Council's web site. (\$900) 12.5 days		
Miscellaneous editing such as desktop publication of a Council pamphlet. (\$900) 12 days		
Participation in Communications Working Group activities including making the Catalog of Federal Assistance Programs (web version) more interactive. (\$2200) 29 days		
Printing and Distribution of Drought Media Packets. (\$1000)		
Subcontracts for Council product development that are not identified above-- this may include co-sponsorship of drought meetings or workshops.		\$9,000
TOTAL COSTS/BUDGET REQUEST	\$46,296	\$100,000

6.3 Funding Support

During the first year, the Council Steering Group and Working Groups were established and they worked toward implementation of the 1997-1998 Work Plan. To support this activity, the Council received financial support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior/Bureau of Reclamation, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Council participants, including steering group and working group members, covered the cost of its staff time and travel expenses.

The future budget needs of the Western Drought Coordination Council could change depending upon the Work Plan requirements. A long-term strategy for funding will involve a variety of sources. This could include: partnerships among federal agencies, WGA, foundations, and the private sector. The long-term strategy may entail working toward direct congressional funding for Council activities or the possible establishment of a nonprofit foundation.